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SECURITY INFORMATION

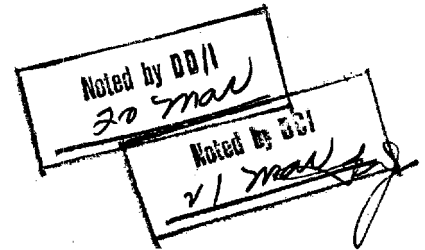
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

²⁰
~~18~~ March 1952

SUBJECT: SE-24: COMMUNIST CHARGES OF US USE OF BIOLOGICAL
WARFARE

THE PROBLEM



To estimate the significance of the Communist psychological warfare campaign alleging use of biological warfare by the US in Korea and China.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

1. The current large-scale propaganda campaign charging US forces with bacteriological warfare in Korea and China has been carefully coordinated throughout the Communist Orbit. It has been directed at both domestic and foreign audiences. The scope and intensity of this campaign has exceeded that of any recent Communist propaganda effort. (See Tab A).

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2. The campaign began with a charge by the North Korean Foreign Minister on 22 February that the US was using BW in North Korea. On 6 March the charges were extended to include Communist China when the Peiping People's Daily, an official Communist organ, stated that the US had sent a total of 448 planes on germ warfare missions over Manchuria during the preceding week, and had in addition bombed and strafed at least one area in Manchuria.

3. On 8 March statements by Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai and an editorial in the official Chinese Communist Party organs:

- a. Charged that American use of BW weapons was aimed at "wrecking the armistice talks in Korea, prolonging and expanding the aggressive war in Korea, and instigating new wars";
- b. Called upon the "peace-loving people of the world" to "rise up and put an end to the sinful designs of the United States Government."
- c. Threatened that US pilots "using bacteriological weapons^x over China" will be treated as "war criminals" when taken prisoner.

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4. Communist and Communist front organizations have protested to the UN and to the International Red Cross against US use of bacteriological warfare. At the UN on 14 March, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Malik gave official Soviet support to Peiping radio accounts of US use of BW. So far, no Communist government has asked for any specific international action aside from "condemnation of the US" by the UN, nor has the subject of BW as yet been ^{brought up} ~~mentioned~~ by the Communists ^{officials} ~~at~~ Panmunjom.

5. The accusations regarding bacteriological warfare have been directed against the US rather than against UN forces generally.

6. The campaign has been supported by alleged "evidence." From a technical standpoint, however, both the Communist description of the attacks and this "evidence" contain flaws and inconsistencies.

7. Elaborate local efforts have been taken to alert Communist military personnel and civilians to carry out counter-measures. It is probable that many of the Communist military personnel in the combat area have been convinced that the reports of the attacks are authentic.

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8. Last spring there was evidence of extensive typhus, cholera, typhoid, and smallpox in North Korea. There is at present no evidence of a recurrence of these conditions and the Communists have denied that there are any epidemics in North Korea. However, neither the absence of evidence nor the Communist denial precludes the possibility that these conditions have recurred. In view of the season and existing public health conditions in North Korea, Communist leaders may be expecting an early outbreak of epidemics of serious proportions. (See Tab A).

9. The Communists have reported diseases of epidemic proportions in specific localities in Communist China, but have not ~~any~~ related these epidemics to the alleged BW attacks.

10. Although Communist forces in Korea are estimated to have the capability of conducting small-scale BW attacks, they are ill prepared either to guard against the possibility of such an effort backfiring into their own ranks, or to defend themselves against possible UN retaliation in kind. If the Soviets provided the means, Communist capabilities for offensive employment of BW might become substantial. However, UN vulnerability to Communist BW attacks is probably far less than Communist vulnerability to UN BW attacks. (See Tab B).

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POSSIBLE PURPOSES OF THE CAMPAIGN

11. A major purpose of the campaign is almost certainly to serve internal Communist propaganda needs. In this respect the following objectives are probably most important:

- a. The establishment of an alibi for existing epidemic conditions in Communist China and/or Korea or in anticipation of such epidemics, with which Communist authorities might be unable to cope;
- b. The stimulation of civilian and military public health and sanitation efforts;
- c. The stimulation of hatred of the US throughout the Communist world.

12. The scale and nature of the campaign are such, however, as to suggest purposes beyond those of internal propaganda. Such broader purposes may be limited solely to general foreign propaganda aims, or may involve preparations for some early major Communist move. Regardless of its original intent, the final purpose of the campaign may be determined by the extent of success achieved as it gains additional momentum.

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13. Among probable foreign propaganda purposes are:

- a. To discredit the US in the eyes of its allies and the rest of the non-Communist world;
- b. To arouse fears that the US is aggravating an already explosive situation in Korea and in the East-West struggle.

14. Among possible foreign propaganda purposes are:

- a. To strengthen the moral position of the Communists in the event that the Communists undertake large-scale offensive military operations in Korea or elsewhere;
- b. To weaken the moral position of the US in the event that large-scale hostilities are resumed in Korea and the US attempts to expand the Korean conflict.

15. The campaign is entirely consistent with and could be in preparation for an early Communist political move with

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respect to the truce negotiations, or for a renewal of large-scale military action. However, the current campaign, which is still gathering momentum, does not yet, in itself, provide a basis for determining whether a major political or military move is imminent. If the Communists should undertake large-scale military operations in Korea, we do not believe they would employ BW.

16. There are no firm indications that a Communist military offensive is imminent in Korea or elsewhere, and there is no firm evidence regarding future Communist moves in the Korean
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cease-fire negotiations.

Attachments:

TAB "A": Disease in the Korean Area

TAB "B": Communist BW Capabilities in the Korean Area

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The Director of Intelligence, United States Air Force, would add the following as the final paragraph of this estimate:

"It is estimated that the current propaganda campaign, which is increasing in intensity and stature, contains within itself a potentiality which could serve as justification for any move, including general war. The lack of intelligence to relate the campaign to any specific Soviet objective necessitates consideration of even those possibilities presently considered least likely."

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